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There was a very full meeting at the Academy of Sciences on the 15th, but little of interest occurred. M. M. Robiquet and Breton Charland announced that they had performed some experiments with the essential oil of bitter almonds, from which they found that this oil on being exposed to the action of the air, became converted into an acid which has all the properties of benzoic acid, and M. Ravier read a note from M. Raucourt on the formation of ice in the Neva, and the different degrees of temperature of water under ice. In order to arrive at his conclusions, he had pierced a body of ice 1000 feet in width, and sixty-three in thickness, and he constantly observed that the temperature of the water at the bottom, was less than that of the water which was immediately under the ice.

Another Number of the *Revue Encyclopédique* has just made its appearance, I have only had time to run through it hastily, so that I cannot attempt to give you a fair analysis of its contents—there is little lost however, I believe, by my omitting to do so, for it appears more than usually dull. Few works of interest have appeared during the last few days, one of the most interesting is *Contes d'Espagne et d'Italie, par M. de Musset*. The *Globe*, which is a literary Journal of great celebrity here, has devoted four columns to a criticism of the work, which certainly seems entitled to the honours of translation. M. Caillie's work has not met with so extensive a sale as might have been expected, considering the *amour propre* of the French. One would have imagined, that the circumstance of the discoverer of Timbuctoo, being a Frenchman, would have caused the work to sell well, but such is not the fact—perhaps its length is against it, the French now seem to be fond of light reading and thin volumes.

I see by the Geneva papers, that an English theatre has been established in that town. The actors, however, are amateurs, and their scenery and decorations are spoken of more highly than their acting. As to English theatricals here, we have no hope of seeing them re-established on a good footing—the French will hear of nothing without Miss Smithson, and no manager has spirit enough to engage her, and such a company as would be fit to support her. Miss Smithson, however, they will have, it seems, for a liberal offer has been made to her to play melo-dramatic parts, without speaking alone of the French theatres.

A company is forming at Paris for the conveyance of fish from the sea coast to the capital, at a cheap and rapid rate. This will be a great addition to the *agréments* of Paris, for at times, during the summer, no fish is to be obtained in a state fit for the table. The Parisians are also turning their attention in the way of improvement to horses, and it is announced that on the first Monday in every month, there will be a market for the exclusive sale of race and other superior horses.

It appears by a recent census of Sicily, that it contains 1,780,000 inhabitants, 300,000 of whom are ecclesiastics, or living on ecclesiastical revenues; there are in the island 1,117 convents, containing 30,000 monks, and 30,000 nuns. Connected with this clerical notice, I may observe, that a German Journalist has been at the pains of making a calculation of the average revenue of churchmen in different countries. According to him the ministers of religion have in France, 756 fr. per annum; in Russia, 244; in

Prussia, 1,460; in Austria, 1,263; in Hungary, 1,482; in Spain, 1,430; in Portugal, 2,906; in England, 10,155; in Ireland, 10,090. The writer calls these ministers all curés or rectors.

The arts and sciences are making rapid progress in France; in every large town academies of sciences, &c. are forming, and at Marseilles there has just been established a scientific and literary institution under the title of *Athénæum*, which promises soon to rival the best institutions of a similar nature in Paris. In this way the liberties of the French nation are secure, for, in the present day, liberty and literature march hand in hand.

London, February 24th.

Nothing has yet been decided as to the rebuilding of the English Opera House. A meeting of the friends of Mr. Arnold is called for Thursday next, at which it is intended to submit a plan for the restoration of a theatre so essential to the patrons of the musical drama. Mr. Arnold's loss is, according to the calculation of his treasurer, Mr. Peake, nearly seventy thousand pounds. There can be no doubt that, if pecuniary means are provided, the theatre may be rebuilt by the 1st of July. The present *Porte St. Martin's Theatre*, in Paris, which is considerably larger than the late English Opera House, was built in less than two months.

Theatricals in London, are, on the whole, rather gayer than usual, but neither the proprietors of Covent-Garden or Drury-Lane can boast of large profits. At Covent-Garden, the nightly receipts, except on the evenings of Miss Fanny Kemble's performance, did not average one-third of the expenditure, until Miss Paton was engaged. Now they are much improved, but it is doubtful whether they do more than cover the expenses. At Drury-Lane the average receipts are quite as good as those of Covent-Garden, but as the salaries are much larger, there must be a loss to the proprietors. It has happened, however, fortunately, that most of the new pieces have been successful.

I was this afternoon at Mr. Gurney's factory, and had an opportunity of examining minutely his steam-carriage. I am sorry to say that it is not in the advanced state which some of the newspapers have represented. The difficulty seems to be chiefly as to the means for conveying a sufficient quantity of water. There is no prospect of its starting as a public conveyance next month—indeed, I fear that it will be many months before the ingenious and enterprising patentee can hope to be remunerated for his invention. Upwards of thirty thousand pounds have been already expended upon this concern. There are now several new plans for locomotive engines talked of; one is a carriage to be impelled by chlorine gas—another by air. The patentee of the latter plan has already exhibited, and I hear, with good success; but some time must elapse ere horses can be entirely dispensed with.

In new publications there is little to notice. The only amusing work of the last week is the second volume of Angelo's *Reminiscences*. These are very curious, and they bear about them marks of truth, which are very agreeable after the trash that has been published under the title of *Reminiscences*. Angelo, is a man who has mixed with society of every description, and he has something to tell of every body. He was, until lately, an eminent fencing

master, but he has been succeeded in his profession by his sons, who allow him an annual stipend. The second volume of Moore's *Byron* is not yet out, but its appearance may be expected in a few days. The clever author of this work is now engaged upon a *Life of Petrarch*, for Dr. Lardner's *Cabinet Cyclopædia*, the sale of which has been very great. Mr. Campbell is hard at work upon his *Life of Sir Thomas Lawrence*, so hard, indeed, that he has given public notice to his correspondents, that he will not be able for some time to answer any letters except on business.

The College of Physicians have just resumed their conversaziones for the season. They have issued a great many cards of invitation, and are determined to do things liberally. It is due to this body to say, that they take every opportunity of diffusing the medical knowledge which they have attained; and that, whilst they are accused by their enemies of being full of bigotry and ignorance, the public daily find them anxiously endeavouring to prove the falsehood of such an imputation.

Some splendid specimens of the arts, in ancient and modern times, have just been purchased by the agents of the king, for the furniture of the New Palace. Upwards of fifty large cases, filled with cabinet furniture, have been received from Paris, and several statues and busts are on their way from Rome. A daily paper states that his Majesty has given 14,000*l.* for a vase. This is not true. For the sum named there were several vases, and other articles of exquisite workmanship. In all these purchases the king is consulted; drawings and descriptions are first sent to him, with the price, and if he approves of them, the agents have orders to complete the purchase."

To the Editor of the Dublin Literary Gazette.

SIR—The extension of Knowledge, and the furtherance of Science, being part of the objects of your very interesting weekly publication, I beg to trouble you with the following slight sketch of a plan for promoting the study of Natural History, which I trust you will not deem inadmissible in your Journal.

HINTS FOR ESTABLISHING A SOCIETY

For Promoting the Study of Natural History, to be formed in Dublin.

To consist of any number of Members, to be elected on paying an annual subscription of _____, or a life subscription of _____.

It is calculated that from the great interest now shown for the study of Natural History, a sufficient number of Members would be immediately obtained to commence the Society on a small scale; at first it might be confined to the Natural History of Great Britain and Ireland, and so far only as the formation of a Museum, containing preserved specimens of quadrupeds, birds, fishes and insects, with a collection of the shells found in the three kingdoms.

The success this might meet with would determine the propriety of extending its purpose, so far as to form a collection of living subjects, on the principle of the Zoological Society of London, and of the *Jardin de Plantes*, in Paris.

The co-operation of almost every country-gentleman in Ireland might be calculated on, in procuring specimens of those animals, birds, fishes, or insects, that are inhabitants of our

country, or of its shores, and of those that visit it at intervals: and it is quite wonderful what might be effected in this way, by a little exertion, in a very short space of time. Many extraordinary circumstances in Natural History often occur, but for want of any mode of recording them, or preserving them in a collected form, they are now altogether lost.

The expense of preserving subjects of Natural History not being great, and it being calculated that the subjects themselves would, for the most part, be presented to the Society, it would not be, perhaps, too sanguine to hope that funds might be easily collected at once, to procure suitable premises for the Museum. All specimens presented to the Society to be labelled with the name of the donor. As funds would permit, a library of Books connected with the Science might be added to it—accessible to all subscribers—in the Museum: and here again, it is not too much to suppose, that numerous gifts from the lovers of the science, and patriotic individuals, might be calculated upon.

In the course of a short time, Lectures on Natural History might be instituted, under such regulations as might be deemed expedient; this would tend greatly to the diffusion of knowledge, on one of the most instructive, as well as most agreeable, of all the sciences.

Making the admittance to the Museum, at suitable times, open to all the members of the family of a subscriber, would be a very satisfactory return for the expense of his annual or life subscription; and it would hardly be too much to suppose that every parent of a family would be glad to enrol his name in a Society calculated to form so delightful a source of amusement to his children.

Out of the members should be chosen, by a ballot at a general meeting, a President, a Committee of twelve or twenty, to conduct the business of the Society, two Treasurers, and a Secretary, all of whom should give their services gratuitously—the only paid officers of the Society being the keeper of the Museum, and a porter.

The above is a mere outline of a plan which must afterwards be subjected to the approval of a general meeting of Subscribers, if it is found that a sufficient number can be obtained to establish the Society.

Should you be disposed to assist in furthering the formation of what appears to me so very desirable an institution, perhaps you would allow a book, for the reception of names, to be left at the Office of the LITERARY GAZETTE, for that purpose.

I am, Sir,
Your very obedient servant,
W.

We are happy to accede to the concluding request of our valued correspondent, and should feel much gratified by the successful formation of such a Society.—Ed.

THE DRAMA.

On Monday evening, Mr. Macready, after a long absence, re-appeared on our boards in his favourite character of Virginius—his merits in this part have been already so amply discussed, and generally admitted, that we fear incurring a charge of hypercriticism, when we do more than record our concurrence in the eulogium which public approbation has long and deservedly conferred upon him; we must however

state, that on Monday night, he not only fully sustained the impression we had already conceived of his excellencies, but appeared to surpass his former efforts.—It has been almost universally allowed, that no actor of the present day can portray the tender sensibilities of parental affection like Mr. Macready: to the possession of a highly cultivated judgment and refined discrimination, he superadds classic purity of style and declamatory powers of the first order; we know there are some who, in this latter respect, think Mr. Young his superior, possessing as that gentleman does, in his style of delivery all the characteristics of the Kembles school, of which we acknowledge ourselves disciples; but every one who has heard Mr. Macready in the soliloquies of *Hamlet* or *Macbeth*, must acknowledge him perfect master of all the graces of elocution. To return however, to Virginius, Mr. Macready's scene in the first act, where the betrothment of Virginia to Icilius takes place, exhibited a sublime picture of paternal feeling, warmed into tenderness by the idea of resigning to another, the being who had been so long the object of his fondest solicitude, and in the transition which immediately follows, where the *amor patriæ* of the Roman soars above the consideration of domestic ties the moment he hears the enemy is in the field, Mr. Macready realised our most elevated notions of devoted heroism. His scene also in the *forum* before *Appius*, was a masterpiece of histrionic ability, and afterwards, where he strangles the tyrant, his furious look and wild demeanour had a most appalling effect.

Though Miss Smithson's Virginia did not quite come up to our ideas of nature, so as to entitle her to unqualified praise, we are, at the same time, happy to observe that in her performance on this occasion, she displayed great truth in conception, and a propriety of judgment, which rendered her well deserving of the applause which was bestowed upon her.

Mr. Cooke's Icilius possessed considerable merit, and confirmed the favourable opinion we have already expressed with regard to this gentleman.

On this evening, Mr. T. P. Cooke also appeared in a nautical piece, called "Black-eyed Susan," in which, of course, he performs the leading character. Mr. Cooke has long been identified with such parts, which he represents with a fidelity, that leaves him without a competitor. The present production, though possessing little merit for originality, derives some interest from his excellent acting, particularly in the last act, where, on hearing sentence of death pronounced, he called forth the sympathies of his audience, by his display of noble resignation, combined with the struggles of ardent affection for his faithful Susan. The piece abounds in sea phrases, and has but one song, (that from which it takes its name,) which was pleasingly executed by Mr. Bedford. Much credit is due to Mr. Bunn, for the exertions he has made on the present occasion, in collecting so much talent as the Theatre now presents, and we trust it will have the effect of reviving that Dramatic taste in this Metropolis, which, if we are to judge by the paucity of visitors to the Theatre since its opening, appears to be rapidly declining.

On Saturday evening, Mr. Dowton having concluded his engagement, took his benefit at our Theatre; we were glad to see the house well attended, not only for the sake of the in-

dividual, but from an anxiety that such talent as Mr. Dowton possesses, should never be permitted to depart from our shores without experiencing that encouragement and reward which those, who have the interests of the Drama truly at heart, will never fail to afford.

MUSIC.

We were among the visitors at the meeting of the Philharmonic Society on Wednesday evening, and enjoyed a rich musical treat—the pieces selected for the occasion, consisted chiefly of foreign compositions, the works of Beethoven, Weber, &c. all of which were most effectively performed, particularly a beautiful symphony of the former composer, which we learn had never before been heard in this country—and Weber's Overture to his Opera of "*The Ruling Spirits*." In the course of the evening, several Songs and Glees were sang, Sir John Stevenson presiding at the Piano Forte. The whole concluded with Beethoven's Overture to Prometheus, which was executed in a manner highly creditable to the performers.

We are happy to see this Society rapidly progressing, under the leadership of Mr. James Barton, and we hail its existence as affording a means for the development of amateur talent, and the further diffusion of musical knowledge in this country.

ROYAL IRISH ACADEMY.

The second general meeting of this academy, for the year 1830, was held on Monday evening last, the lord bishop of Cloyne, the president, in the chair. To this admirable prelate the society is deeply indebted for the zeal and attention which he has always paid, not only to the advancement of science in general, but in a particular manner to the interests of this academy. On Monday evening his lordship laid before the meeting a curious and accurate pencil-drawing of an Aloe, which lately flowered in Lord Carbery's gardens at Castle Freke, together with some interesting particulars respecting its size, manner of growth, &c. in this and other countries. The popular notion is, that it flowers once in a century only; this opinion is, however, incorrect: in the present instance the plant was about fifty years old, when, on the 4th of June last, the flowering shoot burst forth with a noise, and on the 20th of October following, it had attained its full height of 24 feet, the total height from the ground being 30 feet. The girth of the plant at the ground was 9 feet; that of the flower stem at the point of its springing from the plant, 2 feet 2 inches. The length of the lateral flower stalk on which the umbel is borne, was 2 feet 6 inches, and the number of flowers in the largest umbels 250. The length of the longest leaves was 6 feet 6 inches, and their solid thickness about 6 inches.

The plant was kept under cover in its earliest years in a flower pot, afterwards in a large wooden tub; then in the ground, in a conservatory, till about sixteen years ago, when it was removed into the open ground in a sheltered situation, with a good southern aspect, and occasionally protected in the winter by placing a hot-bed frame on posts over it. But even in very hard frosts it had no lateral shoots. As soon as it was perceived to be about to flower, a protection was made for it by a frame.